



Tree risk management: What can you do to make a difference?

Tree risk management: what can you do to make a difference?

Jeremy Barrell's insights into tree risk management are proving so popular that what started as a one-off pilot in Cornwall earlier this year has been extended into a national series now covering all the UK and Ireland as well. Here's what you can expect, in his own words.



Jeremy Barrell is an author and Managing Director of Barrell Tree Consultancy.

Originally the primary purpose of the talk was to summarise the findings from the Freedom of Information request I made to all the highway authorities in the UK in early 2018 about how they are managing highway trees. The results are disturbing and the intention behind publishing them was to exert pressure on those not managing trees responsibly to think again, with the hope that improved tree inspection regimes would reduce avoidable injuries and deaths arising from identifiable tree failures.

An important secondary objective was to share the lessons from two decades of dealing with legal cases relating to tree failures. My experience and observations

have identified several conditions that regularly cause harm and yet do not seem to be reliably documented in the technical literature. The most unexpected of these is that, contrary to conventional tree risk management preaching, small branches seem to be involved in a disproportionately large number of incidents. Other hazards that seem to be more important than the technical literature would imply include the decay that can sit behind large occluded wounds, severe imbalance, asymmetrical root distribution, girdling roots, the speed of wood degradation in some species, and the negative cumulative impact of multiple conditions.

However, what has become most obvious from the three events so far is the desire for the audience to ask questions and seek clarifications on a whole range of risk issues and how those are dealt with in court. Indeed, what the courts are looking for seems important as a pillar of any risk management regime, and that is where my experience can help. For that reason, I have been adjusting the format so that the first hour or so is a question-and-answer session where attendees can ask what they want, and I will do my best to provide the insights that attending court provides.

Another feature of the day that has really helped is the walk around and discussion after lunch, looking at local trees and talking through the common risk management issues that concern many people. There is nothing quite like standing in front of a

tree and hearing how various people would manage it, either to confirm you are aligned to a common approach, or perhaps to make you think more carefully about how you would deal with that problem in future.

If you are coming to any of the events scheduled then think about what clarifications would really help, and be prepared to ask. Discussion, both inside and outside, is a great way to develop and feel more confident about your own ideas.

- www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/
- twitter.com/JeremyDBarrell
- www.facebook.com/Heritage-Tree-Management-573985506028429/

The Association would like to thank Jeremy for his countrywide tour of our branches – and it really will be countrywide by the time 2019 ends!

Jeremy's vast experience and open delivery style really have made these events unmissable. In cooperation with the branches, they have been hosted at great venues, including two botanic gardens and Barcham's. Branch members have ensured these events have run without a hitch, so thank you to all the teams involved. You can read about Scottish Branch's seminar on page 103.

Don't miss out on seeing Jeremy's talk: events in Wales, Ireland, Western and Midland branch areas to come!



Venues past and future on the Barrell Tree Risk Management seminar tour.